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The value of ludic foresight

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LUDIC FORESIGHT

THE VALUE OF LUDIC FORESIGHT

PURPOSE FOR THIS DESIGN THINKING TECHNIQUE

The aim of the research paper is to present case studies of the introduction of Ludic Foresight to interdisciplinary groups, where game and role-playing are used to create artifacts from the future that can stimulate ideas for innovation and problem solving. Ultimately, the aim of such exercises is to engage a wide range of actors in foresight thinking by both engaging in simple but immersive simulation via play, and generating concepts via models that make contemplation of possible futures more tangible, engaging, and provocative. The process, value and limitations of this approach in design thinking and foresight practices will be discussed.

DESIGN/ METHODOLOGY/ APPROACH	Teams of ideally mixed experiences, roles and points of view are asked to play structured games combining social, technological, economic, environmental, political and values- based trends, with assigned identities, missions and resource constrains, in order to elicit new thinking towards problem solving. As a multi-stage process, the games typically entail rapid, lightweight future scenario development via structured role playing followed by artifact creation—typically a model of an ideal product, process or other type of solution called for by both teams' assigned internal identities and missions and assigned external conditions—allowing groups of divergent opions and standpoints to come together to create affordances, converged interpretations of specifications for a future state, and resolutions to present day and possible future tensions.
FINDINGS	Debriefs as well as facilitator observation during past game play suggest the game play methods we have applied, even with some variation, provide an effective means of 1) "leveling the playing field" of seniority and experience among members of a team playing together, removing a frequent barrier to both free exchange of viewpoints and interpretation of possible futures that crops up in business settings, 2) fusing teams of players that had never met face-to-face quickly into a cohesive working group, with the game as a social object on which to focus a common understanding and vision, 3) creating a narrative vehicle on which teams can develop rich stories of imagined futures, and 4) providing a driver for development of a communication artifact that both enables co-creation by team members, and opening the possibility for refinement and iteration through the artifact as prototype.
RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS	Resistance due to lack of reliability, and uncertainty of ROI from the exercise.
RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS	Value of changing roles and perspective — giving permission to alternative views, and the value of playfulness in lowering barriers to co-created foresight.
PRACTICAL/ MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS	Findings may provide a foundation for injecting playfulness as a catalyst for strategic foresight.
ORIGINALITY/ VALUE	As foresight and future studies contemplates the reliability of its process and findings, it might also look towards the value of group dynamics and creative elasticity as critical components in their own right. This paper discusses the imperative to foster decision-making capabilities within a group that is open-minded and able to think laterally.

REFERENCES

YIRCoF'11: Yeditepe International Research Conference on Foresight, August 2011